

**MINUTES OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION  
MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2022**

*4:00 p.m.*

*City Council Chambers (203 South Farwell St)*

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Disa Wahlstrand, Stephanie Finn, Selika Ducksworth-Lawton,  
Kimberly Cronk

STAFF PRESENT: Fire Chief Chris Bell  
Police Chief Matt Rokus  
Deputy Fire Chief Matt Jaggar  
Deputy Fire Chief Al Bertrang  
Human Resources Director Victoria Seltun

OTHERS PRESENT: Fire Union President Taylor Quilling

The Commission convened in open session at 4:01p.m. Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Stephanie Finn. Commissioner Finn asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Police and Fire Commission meeting held on January 20<sup>th</sup> or February 9<sup>th</sup>. No corrections or additions were noted, and the minutes stand approved as circulated.

At 4:02p.m., Commissioner Ducksworth-Lawton joined the meeting.

Chief Rokus provided an update on the eligibility list from the Police and Fire Commission Police Officer interviews from February 9<sup>th</sup>. The eligibility list was not finalized because the Commission was unable to vote on the establishment of the list due to a lack of a quorum at the end of the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Ducksworth-Lawton, seconded by Commissioner Wahlstrand, and passed unanimously to approve the eligibility list.

A discussion was held on Article VI of the Police and Fire Commission Policies and Procedures Manual and the addendum that was made in November 2019. The correct version was never circulated and the updated Article VI was distributed.

Chief Bell provided a personnel update. The department has seen two separations since the last PFC meeting. There are currently four vacancies in the department and the last candidate from the eligibility list was recently interviewed. They expect between two to four retirements within the department in 2022. A discussion was held regarding current CVTC enrollment numbers and future hiring concerns. Chief Bell spoke to the need for a change in how often an eligibility list is established. He proposes that one or two commissioners would be designated for one hour before each Police and Fire Commission meeting in order to conduct interviews of candidates to add to the eligibility list. Chief Bell states they are still waiting on an opinion from the City Attorney's Office whether this is possible. Commissioner Finn states this would be needed before they act.

Chief Bell proposed changes to the Fire Department minimum hiring qualifications. A discussion was held regarding the current qualifications and the Chief's request for revisions to the PFC Policies and Procedures Manual with respect to the hiring qualifications. Commissioner Finn reminded other Commissioners that they may allow others to speak at PFC meetings, but it is up to their discretion. Commissioner Ducksworth-Lawton made a motion to allow Union President Taylor Quilling to speak on behalf of the Fire Union, Commissioner Cronk seconded. Union President Quilling spoke on the Union's thoughts on the proposed changes.

At 4:45 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Wahlstrand, seconded by Commissioner Cronk, and passed unanimously to allow further discussion on Chief Bell's proposed changes to the hiring qualifications. A discussion was held on the current requirements, recruitment efforts, and the scope of what the PFC is able to do with respect to a hiring process.

At 5:00 p.m., Commissioner Wahlstrand made a motion to approve all three of Chief Bell's proposed changes, seconded by Commissioner Ducksworth-Lawton, and passed unanimously.

Chief Bell also provided an operational update. The Station 6 renovation is on track and expected to finish in the fall of 2022.

Chief Rokus provided a personnel update. Two officers have left on good terms since the last PFC meeting. There are currently eight Police Officer vacancies with an expected six to eight retirements by the end of the year. The Police Department is moving forward with two overlapping recruitments. Since the last recruitment began in January, no one has been hired. They are currently in the process of nine background checks and the remaining candidates on the eligibility list are expected to have Chief's Staff interviews in mid-April. The overlapping recruitment's application closes on March 27<sup>th</sup>, with written and physical testing scheduled for April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Chief Rokus reported that from the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association meeting last week, that ECPD is receiving above average application numbers. All surrounding departments reported applicants in the single digits, while the ECPD had 64 applicants last recruitment.

Chief Rokus recommended six candidates be added to the promotional eligibility list for Police Lieutenant. A discussion was held on the promotional eligibility interview process. Commissioner Ducksworth-Lawton made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wahlstrand, and passed unanimously, to approve the Police Lieutenant promotional eligibility list.

Chief Rokus also recommended Officer Cory Reeves for promotion to Police Sergeant. A discussion was held on the involvement of the PFC in the promotional process and possible metrics to measure the candidates. It was noted that this would possibly be a future agenda item. Commissioner Wahlstrand made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ducksworth-Lawton, to approve the promotion of Officer Reeves to Police Sergeant, and passed by majority vote.

Chief Rokus also provided an operational update. The 18 month, approximately five-million-dollar project of community policing body cameras has been fully implemented. Six ECPD personnel participated in the "Bias Inside Us," a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian at the Pablo Center. The participants also read the book "Biased" by Jennifer Eberhardt in order to further educate themselves on implicit bias.

Commissioner Finn asked if there were any future agenda items. Discussion of the process for promotional eligibility lists will be continued in May. It was also noted that, depending on the legal team's advice, an action item may be needed at the next meeting in regards to Chief Bell's proposed changes to the eligibility list and PFC interview process.

Motion was made by Commissioner Cronk, seconded by Commissioner Wahlstrand, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

The next regularly-scheduled Police and Fire Commission meeting is May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Minutes recorded by Kelsey Dittloff, Police and Fire Commission Secretary.